Articles of Enquiry,

UPON WHICH THE

Miniſters, Churchwardens, and *Sidemen*

Of every PARISH within the

Archdeaconry of *Surrey,*

ARE TO

Ground their Preſentments,

AT THE

VISITATION

OF THE

Reverend Dr EDMUND GIBSON,

ARCHDEACON of SURREY,

In the year of our Lord, 1713.

To which are perfixed,

The OATH to be then taken, and the ſeveral CANONS of the Church, which provide for the making ſuch PRESENTMENTS *Regularly* and *Conſcientiouſly.*

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The OATH *to be Adminiſtred to* Churchwardens *and* Sidemen, *at the time of the* VISITATION.

YOU ſhall Swear, that you will Faithful and True Preſentment make, of all Defaults, Vices, and Irregularities, committed in your Parish, which to your knowledge are Preſentable by the Eccleſiaſtical Laws of this Realm.

So help you God.

To the CHURCHWARDENS *in the Archdeaconry of* SURREY.

IN the Courſe of holding my *General Viſitations*, it hath been a great Uneaſineſs to me, to obſerve the *diſorderly Method* of making *Preſentments*; which, tho' it is the Chief End, and by conſequence the Principal Part, of the *Viſitation*, and tho' it is enforc'd by a Solemn Oath taken at the very time, does yet ſeem, in common opinion, to paſs only for a Buſineſs of *Form*; and, as long as that Opinion continues, it will make *Viſitations* themſelves little more than *Form*.

In order to remedy this great Evil, I choſe, at my two laſt Viſitations, to Diſcourſe particularly concerning Preſentments, in point of *Conſcience*, and in point of *Law*.

As to the *Law of Preſentments*, it will be ſufficient, for your purpoſe, to peruſe the *Canons* relating to them, which I have printed for that end. Only I muſt here repeat to you, what I then declared before your Predeceſſors, That I ſhall peremptorily inſiſt upon the Obſervation of the 119*th Canon*, as to the *Framing your Preſentments at home*; where you will have Time to conſider your *Duty* and your *Oath*, and may alſo have the benefit of the Advice and Direction of your Miniſter: and by proceeding in this deliberate way, you will deliver your ſelves from the Danger of *Perjury*, and put an end to thoſe Diſorders which are unavoidably occaſioned by *the Framing of Preſentments at the time of the Viſitation.*

For the *Conſcientious* Diſcharge of this Duty, and the Enforcing of it, I will here ſubjoin what I delivered from the Pulpit, in one of the foremen-tioned Diſcourſes, concerning the Duty of *Rebuking*, and *not ſuffering Sin to reſt upon our Neighbours*, as it particularly belongs to *Churchwardens*.

II. *Of Rebuke and Reproof, and the not ſuffering Sin to reſt upon our Neighbour, as that concerns the Publick Officers of the Church, whoſe Duty it is to Preſent open and notorious Sinners to the Spiritual Power, in order to the Inflection of Spiritual Cenſures. This is an antient Office in the Church; and they who were called on to make ſuch Preſentments, were formerly ſtyled* Synodal Witneſſes, *as being Witneſſes before the Synods or Aſſemblies of the Church, of the Converſation of their Neighbours, in order to the Correction of Unclean Perſons, Drunkards, Swearers, habitual Neglecters of the Church and Sacraments, and the like open and notorious Offenders againſt the Laws of God and the Church. Which Duty of Preſenting, with us, hath been long annext to the Office of* Churchwarden

ardens; *and very properly annext, as it may reaſonably be ſuppoſed, that they o are concerned for the Decency of the Church, cannot well be unconcerned at In-cencies againſt Religion. But becauſe it was eaſily foreſeen, that, in ſome, the want Zeal, in others a miſtaken Tenderneſs, in others again the Fear of Diſpleaſing, ould prompt them to conceal the Scandalous Lives of their Neighbours; therefore e Duty of Detecting and Preſenting them is bound upon their Conſciences by an xpreſs and ſolemn Oath, That, as they hope for the help or favour of God, the reſentment they are about to make, is a True and Faithful Preſentment; which, when othing is Preſented, is a Solemn Declaration, in the Preſence of God and the hurch, that in their reſpective Pariſhes they know no unclean Perſon, no com-on Swearer or Drunkard, no habitual Neglecter of Divine Service, nor y others, who by their wicked Lives are a publick Scandal and Reproach to eligion.*

This is the Meaning and Import of that Oath; and the Breach or Neglect of it attended with two Evils, very hurtful to Religion, and very prejudicial the Souls of Men; the one, That thereby Notorious Sinners, who ought to be reſented, are skreen'd from the Diſciplin of the Church, and ſuffered to go on, ith Impunity, in an open Defiance of God and Religion; the other, That they ho ought to Preſent, do knowingly and deliberately involve their own Souls in the orrible Guilt of Perjury. How therefore an Oath, ſo plain and expreſs in it lf, and ſo diſtinctly adminiſtred to every particular Perſon; an Oath, in the bſervance of which, the Honour of God and Religion is ſo nearly concerned, nd the Neglect whereof draws after it ſuch terrible Conſequences to themſelves nd others; how ſuch an Oath, I ſay, comes to be ſo little regarded in a Chriſtian ation, is, in truth, aſtoniſhing and unaccountable. When they are called before ourts of Juſtice, they will make Conſcience of declaring their full Knowledge, in emporal matters, and in the Cauſe of Man; and why then will they be leſs faith-ul in Spiritual matters, and in the Cauſe of God? If they dread the Diſpleaſure f Men; We may expoſtulate with them, in the words of St. Peter *and St* John, *Acts* 4. 19, 20) Whether it be right in the Sight of God, to hearken to Man, more than unto God, judge ye; *And, being under the Obligation both f your Duty and your Oath, well may you declare in this caſe, as the two Apoſtles id in the words that immediately follow,* We cannot but ſpeak the things, hich we have ſeen and heard. *If you are averſe to the doing ill Offices to your eighbour; remember, that the ſuffering him to go on quietly and ſecurely in s Sins, is the worſt Office you can do him: If you would not be thought to take light in* expoſing *or* diſquieting *your Neighbour; the conſcientious performance this Duty can by no means warrant ſuch a Charge, when there is evidently o way left, but either to take* Perjury *to your ſelf, or to give him over to the* Diſ-pline of the Church.

But to ſpeak freely and plainly in this matter: The great Reaſon why Men are ſo regardleſs of their Duty in this particular, cannot be a Willingneſs to pleaſe, or a Fear to diſpleaſe. When Men are in Temporal Offices, and are called upon to execute the Laws upon their Neighbours, they have none of thoſe Scruples about them, nor is ſuch Execution, when it is known to be their Duty, ever accounted a Teſtimony of Ill Will; and much leſs can it be accounted ſo, when their Obligation to the Duty is enforced by a ſolemn Oath. And therefore it is to be feared, that the great Foundation of their Neglect, is a Lukewarmneſs in Religion, and an Unconcernedneſs for the Honour of Almighty God. For a true Zeal for Religion, when it ſees Wickedneſs open and bareſaced, will be ſo far from neglecting Opportunities to curb and diſcourage it, that it will rejoice in being the Inſtrument of bringing it under the Diſcipline and Correction of the Laws; in order, if it be poſſible, to reform the Perſons, or, at leaſt, to put a Reſtraint upon that open and unguarded Liberty they take in affronting God and Religion. And there cannot be a plainer Teſtimony, that Men have no Zeal for Religion, than to be eaſy and unaffected at the Sight of Wickedneſs, when, at the ſame time, their Station and Duty call upon them to detect notorious and profligate Sinners, in order to the Shame and Puniſhment that deſervedly belongs to them.

There is one thing more that I would offer to the conſideration of the Perſons more immediately concerned on this Head. It will be readily granted, that if the Officers who are appointed by the Church to detect and Preſent, did, in all places, exactly and punctually diſcharge the Truſt repoſed in them, purſuant to their Duty and their Oath; this would caſt a great Terror upon Sin, and give a mighty Check to the Wickedneſs of the Nation. The conſequence of which, is, that they who, in their reſpective Diſtricts, ſuffer Sin to go on quietly, and undiſturbed, are ſo far accountable to God for the Increaſe of Wickedneſs upon Earth, and for that Load of Sin and Guilt, which the Nation labours and groans under.

I ſhall be much pleaſed, if it appear at the Viſitation which is drawing on, that what I now ſend you, has contributed in any degree to the *Conſcientious* Diſcharge of this Duty, and to Order and Regularity at the time of the Viſitation. And to the End, that all *ſucceeding* Churchwardens may (without further *Expence* to the Pariſh) have Directions at hand for the due making of their Preſentments, I muſt Require you, aſſoon as you have framed your own, to depoſit this Book in your Pariſh-Cheſt, to remain there with the Book of Articles heretofore tranſmitted to you in order to

my *Parochial* Viſitation; to which Book you are here † referred, for direction on that Branch of your Preſentment, which concerns the Repairs of *Churches*, *Church-yards*, and *Maſion-houſes*; together with the *Veſtments*, *Veſſels*, and other *Utenſils*, which the Law requires for the decent Performance of God's Publick Worſhip.

† See Tit. V.

I am

Your faithful Friend and Servant,

EDMUND GIBSON.

CANONS

CANONS *of the Church, for the making of Preſentments by* Churchwardens, Regularly *and* Conſcientiouſly.

xxvi. *Notorious Offenders not to be admitted to the Communion.*

NO Miniſter ſhall in any wiſe admit to the receiving of the Holy Communion, ——— any Churchwardens, or Side-men, who having taken their Oaths to preſent to their Ordinaries all ſuch publick Offences as they are particularly charged to enquire of in their ſeveral Pariſhes, ſhall (notwithſtanding their ſaid Oaths, and that their faithful diſcharging of them is the chief means whereby publick Sins and Offences may be reformed and puniſhed) wittingly and willingly, deſperately and irreligiouſly, incur the horrible Crime of Perjury, either in neglecting or in refuſing to preſent ſuch of the ſaid Enormities and publick Offences as they know themſelves to be committed in their ſaid Pariſhes, or are notoriouſly offenſive to the Congregation there; although they be urged by ſome of their Neighbours, or by their Miniſter, or by their Ordinary himſelf, to diſcharge their Conſciences by preſenting of them, and not to incur ſo deſperately the ſaid horrible Sin of Perjury.

In Can. cxvi. Entituled, *Churchwardens not bound to Preſent oftner than twice a Year.*

—PRovided always, that as good occaſion ſhall require, it ſhall be Lawful for every Miniſter, Church-wardens and Side-men, to preſent Offenders as oft as they ſhall think meet. And likewiſe for any godly diſpoſed Perſon, or for any Eccleſiaſtical Judge, upon knowledge or notice given unto him or them, of any enormous Crime within his Juriſdiction, to move the Miniſter, Churchwardens, and Sidemen, as they tender the Glory of God and Reformation of Sin, to preſent the ſame, if they ſhall find ſufficient cauſe to induce them thereunto, that

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may be in due time puniſhed and reformed. Provided, that for their voluntary Preſentments, there be no Fee required or taken of them, under the pain aforeſaid.

In Can. cxvii. Entit. *Churchwardens not to be troubled for not Preſenting oftner than twice a year.*

—NEither ſhall they, nor any of them, after their Preſentments exhibited at any of thoſe times, be at any further trouble for the ſame, except upon manifeſt and evident Proof it may appear, that they did willingly and wittingly omit to preſent ſome ſuch Crime or Crimes as they knew to be committed, or could not be ignorant that there was then a publick fame of them; or unleſs there be very juſt cauſe to call them for the Explanation of their former Preſentments. In which caſe of wilful Omiſſion, their Ordinaries ſhall proceed againſt them in ſuch ſort as in cauſes of wilful Perjury in a Court Eccleſiaſtical it is already by Law provided.

cxix. *Convenient Time to be aſſigned for framing Preſentments.*

FOR the avoiding of ſuch Inconveniences as heretofore have hapned by the haſty making of Bills of Preſentments, upon the days of the Viſitation and Synods, it is Ordered, That always hereafter every Chancellor, Archdeacon, Commiſſary and Official, and every other Perſon having Eccleſiaſtical Juriſdiction, at the ordinary time when the Churchwardens are Sworn, and the Archbiſhop and Biſhops when he or they do ſummon their Viſitation, ſhall deliver, or cauſe to be delivered to the Churchwardens, Queſt-men and Side-men of every Pariſh, or to ſome of them, ſuch Books of Articles, as they or any of them ſhall require, for the Year following, the ſaid Church-wardens, Queſt-men and Side men, to ground their Preſentments upon, at ſuch times as they are to exhibit them. In which Book ſhall be contained the Form of the Oath which muſt be taken immediately before every ſuch Preſentment: to the intent, that having beforehand time ſufficient, not only to peruſe and conſider what their ſaid Oath ſhall be, but the Articles alſo whereupon they are to ground their Preſentments, they may frame them at home both adviſedly and truly, to the diſcharge of their own Conſciences, after they are ſworn, as becometh Honeſt and Godly Men. Articles

ARTICLES OF ENQUIRY, &c.

TIT. I.

Concerning the CLERGY:

1. IS your *Miniſter* a Perſon of ſober, unblameable, and exemplary Life?

2. Is he Reſident upon his *Benefice*; or, if not, hath he a *Curate* conſtantly Reſiding?

3. Doth your Miniſter dwell in the Parſonage or Vicarage-houſe?

4. Doth he read the whole Service of the Church, as preſcribed by the Book of Common-Prayer, diſtinctly, audibly, and devoutly, without Omiſſion or Alteration? and doth he alſo Preach conſtantly every Sunday? unleſs hindred by Sickneſs, or other Reaſonable Impediment?

5. Doth he Adminiſter the Holy Sacrament, at leaſt three times a Year?

6. Doth he diligently Cathechize the Youth of your Pariſh, in the Church, upon Sundays or Holy Days?

7. Is he careful in Viſiting the Sick, and in preparing them for their Departure out of this Life?

TIT. II.

Concerning the PARISHIONERS.

1. ARE there any in your Pariſh, who lie under a common Fame, or vehement Suſpicion, of Adultery, Fornication, or Inceſt?

2. Are there, in your Pariſh, any common Swearers, or Drunkards?

3. Are there any who commonly Abſent themſelves from Morning or Evening Service, on the Lord's-day?

4 Are there any who behave themſelves diſorderly in the Church?

5. Are there any who follow their Callings or ordinary Labour on the Lord's-day, or who compel or permit their Children or Servants ſo to do?

6. Are there any who keep open Shops, or ſuffer Perſons to tipple in their Houſes, on the Lord's-day?

TIT. III.

Concerning PARISH *and* CHURCH-OFFICERS.

1. ARE your Churchwardens choſen every Year in *Eaſter-week*, by the Miniſter and Pariſhioners, or one by the Miniſter, and the other by the Pariſhioners?

2. Have the laſt Churchwardens given a juſt Account to the Miniſter and Pariſhioners, and delivered up whatſoever Money or other things do of right belong to the Church or Pariſh?

2. Have

3. Have you a Pariſh-Clerk, of 20 years of Age or upwards, and well qualified for the decent and laudable Diſcharge of that Office?

4. Doth he, or the Sexton, open and ſhut the Church-doors at due times, and toll the Bells for Divine Service at the uſual Hours?

5. Doth he, or the Sexton, take care that the Church be kept clean from Duſt, and Cobwebs, and the like Annoyances?

TIT. IV.

Concerning the OFFICERS *of the Archdeacon's Court.*

1. HAth any Officer of the Archdeacon's Court demanded or taken undue and unreaſonable Fees, for any Cauſe or Matter tranſacted by him?

2. Hath any Officer of the ſaid Court ſuppreſſed or delayed the Proſecution of Perſons duly Preſented by the Miniſter or Churchwardens?

3. Hath any of them taken Money by way of Commutation for Offences, or otherwiſe, to excuſe or diſmiſs the Offenders from Puniſhment?

TIT. V.

Concerning Churches, and Churchyards, and the Manſion-houſes of Parſons, Vicars, and Curates.

1. ARE your Church, and Churchyard, and the Manſion-houſe of your Rector and Vicar, in ſuch Repair and Order, within and without, as is required in a Book of *Articles* and *Directions* tranſmitted to you in the Year 1711. in order to a Parochial Viſitation of the Archdeacon?

2. Is your Church duly furniſhed with Books, Veſtments, Veſſels, and all other things particularly ſpecified in the *Articles* and *Directions* aforeſaid?

3. Was the ſaid Book of *Articles* and *Directions* carefully depoſited in your Pariſh-Cheſt, and doth it now remain there?

4. Are there any who refuſe to pay their Rates, towards the Repairs of the Church, and the providing of ſuch things as are neceſſary for the Service of Almighty God?

FINIS.